

Delegation: Know Your Responsibility

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1 Contact Hour

Objectives:

- Define delegation.
- Describe appropriate delegation and supervision of tasks by licensed nurses.
- State the *Five Rights of Delegation*.
- Identify nursing tasks that may not be delegated to a nursing assistant.
- Discuss the importance of communication during delegation.

Nursing delegation is defined by each state by its Board of Nursing (BON). Nursing practice in each state is governed by the rules and regulations. The rules and regulations vary from state to state.

Two documents govern nursing practice in New Hampshire, the **Nurse Practice Act (NPA), Chapter 326-B** and the **Administrative Rules, Nur 100-800**. The NPA is the law that governs nursing practice and the Administrative Rules outline how the NPA is implemented.

Nursing assistants are an important member of the healthcare team. Nursing assistants assist the nurse by performing delegated direct nursing care tasks. Licensed nurses promote the health of an individual by making healthcare decisions and supervising the delivery of nursing care including the delegation of nursing tasks to others. To meet the public's need for quality healthcare, healthcare providers must ensure appropriate delegation of tasks and responsibilities amongst healthcare workers.

Nursing assistants perform nursing-related duties under the direction and supervision of a licensed nurse. This process is called *delegation*. The NH Board of Nursing defines delegation as, "the transfer, at the discretion of the nurse, of authority for the performance of a task of client care from the licensed nurse with authority to perform the task to someone who does not otherwise have such authority."

In order to receive delegation of a nursing task appropriately, a nursing assistant must be aware of their *Scope of Practice* and the *Rights of Delegation*. **The New Hampshire Licensed Nursing Assistant "Scope of Practice" is outlined in the NPA, RSA 326-B:14.**

The Five Rights of Delegation:

Nursing assistants work under the direction/supervision of a licensed nurse. In order to receive delegation appropriately, a nursing assistant must be knowledgeable about the "Five Rights of Delegation". These "Rights" guide effective delegation.

The Right Task: The task delegated must be right for the client and for the nursing assistants knowledge and experience. If the nursing assistant has not performed the task before, it would not be appropriate for the nurse to delegate the task or for the nursing assistant to accept the task. Tasks that include assessment of the patient, planning and evaluating patient care, and giving care that requires ongoing nursing judgment cannot be delegated to or accepted by nursing assistants.

The Right Circumstances: In determining whether delegation is appropriate, several factors must be taken into consideration. These include: type of setting, supervision offered, available resources, and the condition of the client. Certain tasks may not be appropriate in all healthcare settings and the level of supervision varies.

The Right Person: Ensures the right person is delegating the right task to the right person to be performed on the right person. The nurse is responsible for determining whether a task for a specific patient should be delegated to a specific nursing assistant. The nursing assistant should have been taught to perform the task and competency should be assessed. A nursing assistant cannot delegate a task to another staff member. The nurse should not delegate a task that is not within their scope of practice or a task they are not familiar with.

The Right Direction

and Communication: In delegating a task, the nurse must give the nursing assistant clear, concise information on which to perform the task safely and effectively. The information should include: what task is to be performed and for whom, when the task is expected to be performed and concerns or conditions to report to the nurse during the task once the task is completed.

The Right Supervision: The supervising nurse is responsible for supervision of the nursing assistant performing the delegated task. Supervision should include ensuring that the nursing

The Right Supervision: assistant is competent to perform the task and
Cont. understands the request of the task. Supervision also includes assisting with problems /concerns during the task and follow-up after to ensure the desired result and documentation occur.

Laws and rules that govern nursing practice vary from state to state. Nursing assistants must be familiar with the laws and rules within the state in which they are working.

Communication:

By working together and having open communication, the supervising nurse and the nursing assistant can achieve effective delegation and provide excellent patient care.

Nursing assistants should not accept nursing tasks that they are not educated or competent to perform and should communicate this to the delegating nurse prior to accepting a delegated task.

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Post Test

1. Define delegation.
2. The power to act in the role of a nursing assistant comes from the _____.
3. Once the nursing assistant has learned a task, it is appropriate for the nursing assistant to perform the task for any given patient, in any situation.

True or False

4. List and explain the "Five Rights of Delegation".

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

5. Prior to accepting a delegated task, the nursing assistant must have been trained to perform the task and demonstrated competency in the task.

True or False

6. Any task of nursing care delegated by a licensed nurse must be supervised by the delegating nurse.

True or False

7. Explain the importance of communication in the process of delegation.